

Oral History Program: Biographical Notes

Eric ADAM (1913 -)

Mechanical and Electrical Engineer

Birth & Family: Born 26 December 1913.

Education: North Sydney Boys High School 1926 - 1929.

Apprenticeship Fitting and Turning NSW Railways 1930 - 1935

Qualifications: BE Mech. and Elec. (Honours), Sydney University, 1935 - 1939

Memberships: F.I.E, Aust., CPEng. M.I.Mech.E., CEng., F.I.V.M.A.

Awards:

Work History: After completing Third Year Certificate in 1929, Adam undertook a year of odd jobs before commencing his apprenticeship as a Fitter and Turner with the NSW Railways at the Eveleigh Workshops in Redfern NSW.

In 1939 at the age of 26, Adam completed the Eddy Memorial Railway Scholarship at Sydney University and commenced working for Sydney County Council at Bunnerong Power Station as Assistant Engineer, Efficiency Staff, responsible for water management, fuel efficiency and station efficiency.

After 10 months with SCC he found a position with the Commonwealth Railways in Port Augusta as a draftsman assisting in designing dining cars. He was subsequently promoted to the positions of Chief Draftsman and Works Manager. Adam was later appointed Locomotive Superintendent of Central Australia Railway, running trains from Quorn to Alice Springs and introducing train controls to the run.

In 1949 Adam moved to a position as Manager, and later Engineering Director with Commonwealth Engineering Ltd, to open up a factory in Brisbane constructing carriages for Queensland Railways. Adam worked on introducing such innovations air conditioning, steel carriages and all electric kitchens in the dining cars. Adam then returned to Sydney to run the Granville works, which he did for ten years. A licence was obtained from Budd to build stainless steel cars as seen in America including "roomette" and "twinette" sleeping car designs. After Comeng won the tender Adam came up with the "zig zag" corridor design for the Brisbane to Sydney roomette sleeping cars, as there were faults in the American design. Due to the success of these trains it was decided to build the same trains to run from Sydney to Melbourne – the "Southern Aurora".

In 1961 Adam became Chief Executive of Engineering with Australian Consolidated Industries Ltd responsible for running all engineering activities nationally and internationally within the group. He also introduced Applied Value Analysis to ACI.

In 1967 Adam set up his own company Value Analysis Australia Pty Ltd conducting workshops for various companies.

From 1969 to 1972 Adam was Manager of Technical Services at Boral Ltd; Boral would buy companies and Adam would try to turn them around.

In 1972 Adam moved to London to take on the position of Senior Industrial Promotion Officer on the staff of the Agent General for NSW. In this position he would look at products and processes suitable for Australia.

Upon his return in 1975 Adam was approached to take on the position of Managing Director of Driclad Industries Pty Ltd - his job was to get the company running properly.

After further stints in Value Management and with Boral and Monier Besser in Adelaide, Adam set up the Institute of Value Management S.E.C.V.

After retirement in 1977 Adam helped set up Life Line as Vice President and then assisted in setting up Life Education Centres with Reverend Ted Noffs.

Prepared by Tricia Willis, April 2006 from oral history interview conducted on 3.10.1996.